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BOOK REVIEWS

The Teaching of Modern Languages. By DR. LEOPOLD BAHLSSEN. Translated from the German by M. BLAKEMORE EVANS, Ph.D. Boston: Ginn & Co.

The overworked American teacher of modern languages might well have hesitated to plunge into the study of the reform of modern-language instruction in Germany, being at the very outset confronted with two volumes of mere bibliography,¹ not to mention thirteen volumes of a journal² wholly devoted to the same subject. Thanks are therefore due to Miss Brebner³ for the initial attempt to summarize the main issues of the controversies involved for the benefit of the language teachers in England. Her helpful booklet, almost unknown in this country, has now been succeeded by a larger publication in the American book market, including among other valuable material a history of the entire movement. Dr. Bahlsen's active participation in this long pedagogical struggle from its inception renders him especially fit for his task; to the American public he is known through his work at Teachers College, Columbia University, as well as in the Educational Department of the St. Louis Exposition.

We most earnestly recommend the serious study of his book to every teacher of foreign languages in this country, to the advocate of the so-called "natural method" no less than to him who sees in grammar the chief field of usefulness. All can learn from this terse and fair exposition. In comprehensible form it lays before us the systematic efforts of German schoolmen who now for well-nigh a generation have faithfully labored in theory and practice to bring forward their branch of the school curriculum.

Of the seven chapters of Dr. Bahlsen's book but two will be mentioned here, the first as it treats of the important subject of phonetics. He rigidly insists upon a phonetic basis for all foreign-language instruction. Now, it seems that we are nowhere less prepared to meet the demands of progressive teaching than in this subject, inasmuch as to the majority of our high-school teachers phonetics is still a *terra incognita*. The evil is to be remedied primarily by the universities and other institutions furnishing our teaching staff; for, however much opinion may vary as to the amount of phonetics that should be introduced into the classroom, every thoughtful person must admit that the teacher should be familiar with the manner in which the sounds of the languages handled by him are produced. Until such time as a chair for phonetics be established at all higher institutions of learning, the teacher is necessarily thrown upon his own resources; for in these days of applied science ignorance of phonetics on the part of the instructor becomes a crime toward the pupil.

Attention is called secondly to the chapter entitled "A Reading Course in German for Secondary Schools" for the following three reasons: We agree with the "Reform" that the determining factor in the selection of German reading should be to acquaint the student with Germany, with the nature and customs of the German people, and with Germany's culture and intellectual life. Dr. Bahlsen is further

¹Hermannn Breymann, *Die neusprachliche Reform-Literatur von 1876—1893* (Vol I), von 1894—1899 (Vol. II). Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1895, 1900.

²Wilhelm Viëtor, *Die Neueren Sprachen*. Marburg in Hessen: N. G. Elwert.

³Mary Brebner, M.A., *The Method of Teaching Modern Languages in Germany*. 3 ed. London: C. J. Clay & Sons, 1904.

right in believing that such an acquaintance can never be obtained by the prevailing custom of studying separate texts, but by the creation of a first-class German Anthology (such as described on pp. 90 ff.). Finally, we feel sure that all teachers longing for a wholesome change from the love stories now so much used in the classroom will welcome the rich suggestions here offered for future editors. Occasional slips, as the recommendation of Schiller's *History of the Thirty Years' War* for high school reading, are doubtless due to the shortness of Dr. Bahlsten's stay among us, and can easily be rectified.

PAUL O. KERN.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

Experimental Psychology, Instructor's Manual, Quantitative Experiments. By EDWARD BRADFORD TITCHENER. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1905. Pp. clxxi+453.

The present volume completes the series of manuals for students and teachers of experimental psychology which Professor Titchener has been at work upon for several years. The author has accomplished a most arduous and difficult task with such distinguished success as to put the coming generation of psychologists under lasting obligation to him. The standard of excellence which he has set himself has been of the highest, and his services to psychological scholarship will be recognized for many years to come. This is no common fate for a maker of textbooks.

The publication of these volumes marks a transition in the methods of teaching and studying psychology which is little less than revolutionary. Formerly all instruction upon this subject was conducted by lectures or by the use of a text which the student was expected to absorb more or less uncritically. Now the student is inspired to find out all he can for himself, and by the aid of such books as these of Professor Titchener's he is put in possession of all the most elaborate and exact methods of ascertaining psychological facts. Even where regular texts are employed, as is still under many conditions most advantageous, the emphasis is laid quite as much upon the method of getting the information and its consequent reliability as upon the facts learned.

In this transition to a more consciously empirical point of view nothing is more striking than the development of the so-called psychophysical methods for the quantitative evaluation of psychological processes. The history of all the natural sciences discloses a period in which merely qualitative analysis was attempted, after that a period of tentative and often abortive effort at explanatory classification, and finally a period during which mathematical principles were successfully applied. The sciences have become exact just in proportion to the extent to which this quantified treatment has been found applicable. The biological sciences have naturally proved more obdurate to this mode of procedure than the physico-chemical group, but many of their departments have at last yielded to patient and ingenious endeavor, and psychology itself has finally been found vulnerable. Professor Titchener's manuals constitute incidentally a luminous history of these struggles to reduce to quantified formulæ the mental relations with which the psychologist deals. The layman will hardly find these manuals practicable reading for moments of relaxation, but for those who would master the issues at stake they have no competitors, much less rivals.

JAMES R. ANGELL.

*See also the reviewer's article "Realien im neusprachlichen Unterricht," *Paedagogische Monatshefte*, Milwaukee, Wis., Jahrgang VI, Heft 7-8, p. 238.